

would bring in a bill for compelling every year to consume its own smoke.

1828.—In nine cases out of ten we do observe that rule. But there must be some exceptions. Mr. Montgomery's Omnipresence of the Deity is at present only in the 22d edition, and I am sure you would feel that great injustice was done to that valuable poem, if it were not allowed the chance of circulating as widely as Mavor's spelling-book, which reached the 350th some years ago.

1829.—*Revenons à nos moutons.* Enumerate the heir-looms—you may omit the national debt.

1828.—Imprimis! three Quarterly Reviews,—

1829.—I dispute your first item; and I have private reasons which will make me very pertinacious in my opposition.

1828.—Private reasons, indeed! You suppose then, that nobody knows but yourself that it is one of your projects for immortality, to produce a 'London Review' which is to be conducted upon spick and span new principles, and is to eclipse all its predecessors. And a fine project it will be! A review under the management of a set of College-men. Ha! ha! ha!

1829.—And pray, my most accomplished *sœur aînée*, why may not a review be well conducted by a set of College-fellows? Have your men of the world displayed such astonishing wisdom in their critical transactions, that they have a right to scoff at men of science? Did the common sense of 'The Edinburgh Review' make its political predictions during the war particularly successful? Did that same common sense enable it to find out two doctrines upon any subject of poetry or literature, which would hang together; or which did not instantly fly off by an instinct of repulsion the moment any attempt was made to connect them? Did that 'common sense' prevent it, in its controversy with the Universities, from blaming every thing that ought to have been praised,—from excepting in their censures only those things that ought to have been blamed,—and from suggesting reforms that were not utterly chimerical, only when they happened to be impracticable? Is the man-of-the-world pen of Mr. Croker contributed to 'The Quarterly' the articles which its contributors can look back upon with the greatest satisfaction, as being freest from vulgar feeling, vulgar thinking, and vulgar language. Or, lastly, would 'The Westminster' have been so very much the worse if there had chanced to be one man of science connected with it, who could have told its conductors that 'principle' means 'beginning,' and that calling their theory of attending only to ends, a 'principle,' is about as outrageous a bull as was ever committed in any work, English or Irish.

1829.—My dear, I hope you do not mean to make such long speeches generally; for if you do, I am sure you will be a very unpopular twelvemonth. As for 'The London Review,' if you can build a reputation on it I shall be very glad, but I do not see why, instead of adopting the moderate language of its editor, who disclaims all intention of rivaling his predecessors, you should talk so disparagingly concerning those excellent works. I suppose you were not serious in affecting to decline taking this lot.

1829.—'The Edinburgh' and 'Quarterly,' I suppose I am bound by long prescription; but 'The Westminster,' I thought had been in its grave any time these three months.

1828.—So it was, I believe, for a short time; but it has met with a joyful resurrection. Henceforth, I learn from the advertisements, it is to contain abundance of light, humorous, tricky articles; and I have heard, upon respectable authority, that a set of very promising young men have been hired to write them who will be paid by the joke. An excellent scheme, Mr. Bentham remarked, for securing a product of the greatest possible quantity of power into the least possible

quantity of laziness in the jokers. It seems to me better than their former mode of paying.

1829.—What was that?

1828.—Why, they paid upon a theory of general consequences; in which great calculation the particular consequences to the writers were sometimes overlooked.

1829.—Am I to take all your stock of Magazines?

1828.—Which would you be inclined to leave?

1829.—Certainly not 'Blackwood,' which was never, in any part of its existence, so good as it is now; nor 'The London,' though there was a passage in the last number savouring of mysticism—I like not that,—nor 'The New Monthly,' though I do hope its excellent Editor will not tolerate so much personality as has lately disgraced its pages. And as for 'The Monthly,' it is not worth while—to quarrel about trifles.

1828.—But your whole property, I trust, does not consist of dead stock. You have some men to bequeath?

1829.—Yes, I rejoice to think that the greatest, by far the greatest, part of those who were given into my keeping, by my predecessor, will be delivered safe and sound into your hands. You have Scott, with powers unweakened by exercise, with a heart not frostbitten by the world. You have the hoary majesty of Goethe—you have the mellowed mind and voice of Coleridge—you have Wordsworth—if not so active-minded, yet as calm and sublime as ever—you have Southey, whose kindness of spirit neither years, nor (worse) politics can diminish—you have Lamb, of whom I have said all that can be said of a head and a heart, when I have said that he is the author of 'Rosamond Gray.' One or two, alas! you will miss out of the company of goodly men who started with me.

1829.—One, indeed, I shall miss—one whom all men and all children honoured—one who had both an eye and a soul, (how few have either!) the poet Thomas Bewick—we shall not soon look upon his like again.

1828.—Yes; he is worthy of your lamentations. But I have one word to say to you before I close my report. There is a weekly publication, which has been a yokefellow of mine, and which I commend to your regards. We were born within a few days of each other; we have grown up together in strength, and, I believe I may add, in general favour. Very good friends I and that publication were

'In youth,

But whisper'd words will poison truth—'

and it was repeated to me, that, when my foster-sister had won the ear of the public, she made use of her privilege to malign me, and to talk against our venerable sire, THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. I was told that she was inattentive to what I was doing and thinking of, and to what had been done for the last 128 years, and that she sought only how she might live and converse with the men of a by-gone generation, or how she might project herself into an uncertain and unrealised future. I was told that, when she spoke of my great men, it was with a half sneer, as who should say, 'They are very well, considering the time of their appearance, but they are nothing to the men I have seen and talked with in the good old times;' or that, if she did by chance praise any of them, it was because they stood above me and looked down upon me. My pride was aroused at these imputations, and I thought I was hardly used by my old friend; but, of late, I have had some explanation with her, and I think I now understand her meaning. She told me that, so far from holding me in light esteem, or trying to put me out of sight, she borrowed from me all, or nearly all, the subjects which she thought it worth her while to think about; that she had always, and, of late, very carefully, endeavoured to choose topics of present and passing interest; that the characters of existing men formed one prominent branch of her

trade; that the examination of new books was another and a still larger branch; and that she had taken measures to extend both these branches and to add to her novelties in all other departments. She added, nevertheless, that what I had heard of her zeal for the writings of the elder men, and of her reverence for those of the present day who resembled them, was most true; that she sought her materials from me, but that she would never seek her spirit from me; that she would not do so for this reason, among many others, because she deemed it impossible to exercise a just judgment and scrutiny over the subjects which an age furnishes us with; unless we strive to lift ourselves to a level from which we can look down upon them; that, therefore, she would endeavour, as conscious how important her age is to study it aright; as knowing that the age cannot be the judge of its own merits, not to accept its authority; as feeling how weak she herself is not to substitute for its opinion her own; and as being persuaded that there are men living, both in books and in the world, who have possessed lights sufficient to show them through the labyrinth of this investigation, to borrow those lights for her own use, and so far as may be to imbibe something of the spirit which kindled them. And this, she bade me tell you, would be her course likewise, when you should ascend my throne; that she would be beholden to you for all the knowledge you can communicate, and would seek after it most carefully; and to make such knowledge of avail, she would more than ever strive not to be a partaker of your follies and infirmities.

1829.—(Looking very engagingly.)—Perhaps shall be able to persuade this strange person that these infirmities are not very numerous.

1828.—We shall see.

[A misty vapour arises and fills the chamber; through which no object is seen for some time discernible. As it clears away, a face is seen looking from one of the frames, which is recognised as one of the figures in the dialogue. The clock strikes twelve, and the curtain falls.]

AR BARDONIAETH CYMRAEG.

*Ar Barddoniaeth Cymraeg. Jan Dafydd Williams. Dolgellau, 1828.*  
*On British Bardism. By David Williams. Dolgellau, 1828.*

In presenting to our readers an abstract of the essay, the title of which we have prefixed to this article, we are doing what we believe has never yet been done by the periodical press of England. We are not acquainted with any instance where a translated analysis of a Welsh work has been submitted to the perusal of the English reader; not even in the case of that splendid and most valuable collection, 'The Archaeology of Wales,' the gift of that patriotic and generous man, 'Owen Jones, the Thames-street furrier.' That much valuable historical matter has been thus hidden from the public scrutiny, is a fact which we well know; and, in the instance of the work before us, we hope that the interest of the subject will afford a sufficient proof that one attempt at this innovation in literature may not be entirely useless.

To the intelligent lover of antiquity there is no subject which bears a higher charm, or possesses stronger claims upon his attention, than that which relates to the early poetry of a nation; and if that nation be allied to his own, this interest must be excited in exact proportion to the proximity of such alliance. Thus, of all institutions connected with the early history of Britain, that of Bardism is certainly one of the most interesting, involving, as it does, so great a portion of the general as well as particular history of the period, and affording so much information as to the manners, religion, and customs of the people.

In every rude and uncivilized country, we find some institution analogous to that of Bardism;

and in no part of the world was it cherished with greater reverence and enthusiasm than among the hardy aborigines of our own island. Upon them the institution had powerful claims in two important points of view: First, by affording, in some of its subordinate ordinances, the most pleasing means of relaxation from the toils of battle and the chase; and, secondly, by constituting, in its higher and more solemn offices, a record of the history, the laws, and even the religion of the people; for, to borrow the words of Sir Walter Scott, 'there has hardly been found to exist a nation so brutishly rude as not to listen with enthusiasm to the songs of their bards, recounting the exploits of their forefathers, recording their laws and moral precepts, or hymning the praises of their deities.' Considering the institution of Cambro-British Bardism, then, as a conspicuous feature in the early history of that people, and as an important part of the mechanism of the state, we shall find our subject interesting, and not, perhaps, totally uninteresting; for we shall see that its ordinances were all founded upon the strictest observance of morality, piety, and virtue.

The precise origin of Bardism, as an institutional system, is not very clearly defined. That it arose from a natural predilection in the British for the arts of poetry and music, we may safely surmise; but the period of its elevation to its high and perfected institution is exceedingly obscure. We learn from the Greek and Roman writers, who supply any notice of the Bardic institution, that it was one of high antiquity; and those curious relics, 'The Triads of the Isle of Britain,' commemorate Tydain, Tâd Awen, that is, *Tydain, the Father of the Muses*, as the first who reduced poetry to a system, and thus laid the foundation of the institutes and privileges of Bardism. With the exception of this solitary record, all that we confidently know is, that it was coeval with, or rather that it emanated from, Druidism, and sprang up, as it were, a beacon-light from the ashes of an institution which was composed of the gloomy barbarity of a bloody superstition on the one hand, and of the germs of piety and moral excellence on the other. It seems as if all the dark, and savage, and horrible portion was destroyed, leaving only the bright and beautiful parts of the system to grow up into a state of perfection almost incredible, under all the circumstances connected with it.

We have said that Bardism was coeval with Druidism; and we shall briefly explain how it was so. Both Strabo and Ammianus Marcellinus inform us, that there were three orders of men in high esteem among all the Celtic tribes, and these were, the Druids, the Bards, and the Vates or Erwates; in Welsh, *Derwydd*, *Bardd*, and *Ovydd*. The Druids, it appears, were the ministers and teachers of religion, the superintendents of sacrifices, and the instructors of youth. Their influence and importance were unlimited, and far exceeded that of the sovereign. From Cæsar we learn that they were the judges of the people, and that they dispensed rewards and inflicted punishments without the sanction or interference of any higher tribunal. They were, in short, the rulers of the people, and their power extended to a domination over the souls as well as the bodies of the Britons.

The Bards, during the existence of Druidism, were a much more lowly order: they were merely the annalists, poets, and genealogists of the age. 'The office of the Bard,' says the Triad, 'is to keep up a memory of arts and sciences: this being his duty as a Bard regularly and fully instituted; and, also, to preserve the memory of that which relates to the country, family, alliances, pedigrees, arms, districts, and rights of the Welsh nation or territory.'

\* *Derwydd* signifies the body of the oak, and figuratively, the man of the oak. *Bardd* signifies the branching of the oak; and *Ovydd* implies a disciple, according to some, and a diviner or augur, according to others.

The Vates were the officiating priests; and it was necessary that they should be so far skilled in natural history as to be able to determine on the particular appearance of the viscera of the sacrificial victims. To this, it is probable, that a knowledge of medicine—simple, it is true, and sufficiently empirical—was added, with the imposing practice of divination; a mode of influencing the human mind of too effective a nature to be omitted. The Triad makes no mention of their officiation at sacrifices: it merely states that the Ovydd should possess a natural poetic genius, with a praiseworthy knowledge, which shall be properly proved before a lawful session of Bards.

While the Druids were the priests and augurs of the Celtic nations, particularly those of Gaul and Britain, the Bards were, strictly speaking, the literary professors of those people. The ancient custom of conveying instruction in verse, rendered them eminently calculated to serve as the teachers of the people; and thus, by blending instruction with delight, they reduced the arts of memory and oral tradition into a well systematised science. Song was one of their favourite methods of giving permanence to orality: songs, skillfully composed on subjects of general interest, were learnt with avidity;—they soon became popular, and they could be transmitted, without the aid of letters, from person, time, and place, to ages the most remote. These songs, chiefly of didactic character, were always submitted to the grand Bardic sessions, (*Eisteddodau*), where they were discussed and criticised with the most vigilant scrutiny; and if admitted at the first *Eisteddod*, they were re-considered at the second, and reserved, even then, for confirmation at the third meeting. This being the rigid practice, it was impossible for perversion or interpolation to take place; nor could there be in such records the slightest deviation from truth.

The order of Bards was subdivided into three ranks; namely, *Privardd*, *Poswardd*, and *Arwyddward*. The *Privardd* was one who invented and taught such systems of philosophy as were before unknown: the *Poswardd*'s office was not so elevated, being only the promoter and promulgator of knowledge already discovered; while the *Arwyddward*, or Ensign Bard, was, properly, a herald-at-arms, whose duty it was to declare the genealogy, and emblazon the arms of the princes and chieftains, to keep correct record of them, and to arrange and alter them according to the dignity and merit of their possessors. In later times the *Arwyddward* attended the king and his chieftains in all their battles.

From those interesting and invaluable documents, the Triads, we learn many important particulars relating to the Bards and their functions.

In the first place, it was ordained that a Bard should possess 'an eye that can see nature, a heart that can feel nature, and a resolution that dares follow nature.' Then came the 'three ultimate intentions of Bardism,—to reform morals and customs, to secure peace, and to celebrate the praises of all that is good and excellent.' To these grand and essential requisites were added others of minor importance, but still requiring a very due degree of observance. We transcribe some of the most interesting:

'The three primary privileges of the Bards of Britain are: maintenance wherever they go; that no naked weapon be borne in their presence; and that their testimony be preferred to that of all others.'

'Three things are forbidden to a Bard,—immorality, satire, and the bearing of arms.'

'The three joys of the Bards of Britain: the increase of knowledge, the reformation of manners, and the triumphs of peace over the lawless and depredatory.'

'The three splendid triumphs of the Bards of the island of Britain: the triumph of learning over ignorance, the triumph of reason over irrationality, and the triumph of peace over the lawless and unruly.'

'The three necessary, but reluctant, duties of the Bards of the island of Britain: secrecy, for the sake of peace and public good; invective lamentation required

by justice; and to unsheath the sword against the lawless and depredatory.'

'Three things cannot be controverted: the usages, the song, and the voice of the Bardic Convention.'

'Without three qualifications, no one can be a Bard: a poetical genius, a knowledge of the Bardic institutes, and irreproachable morals.'

'There are three avoidant injunctions on the Bard: to avoid sloth, as being a man of diligence and exertion; to avoid contention, as being a man of peace; and to avoid folly, as being a man of reason.'

These contain most of the leading maxims of the British Bardic institution; but there are separate rules for the different departments of the system; as theological triads, ethical triads, triads of wisdom, and triads of song. Of the latter, we shall now transcribe a few specimens, and reserve our notice of the others to a future opportunity, when we shall consider the nature, authenticity, and peculiar character of the British Triads generally.

The 'Triads of Song' are chiefly critical rules for poetic composition; and it would be well if many of our modern bards would pay some attention to the exquisite directions which they contain.

'The three final intentions of poetry—accumulation of goodness, enlargement of the understanding, and whatever increases delight.'

'The three indispensables of language—purity, copiousness, and aptness.'

'The three ways whereby a language may be rendered copious—by diversifying synonymous words, by a variety of compounds, and by a multiformity of expression.'

'The three qualities wherein consists the purity of a language—the intelligible, the credible, and the pleasurable.'

'The three supports of language—order, strength, and synonymy.'

'The three things that constitute just description—just selection of words, just construction of language, and just comparison.'

'Three things should be well understood in poetry—the great, the little, and the connectives.'

'Three things should be avoided in poetry—the frivolous, the obscene, and the superfluous.'

'Three dignities of poetry—the true and the wonderful united, beauty and sapience united, and the union of art and nature.'

'The three utilities of poetry—the praise of virtue and goodness, the memory of things remarkable, and strengthening of the affections.'

'The three indispensable purities of poetry—pure truths, pure language, and pure manners.'

From these maxims, we can plainly perceive the great objects of Bardism. We see that a general diffusion of peace, good-will, virtue, and benevolence, was very strongly inculcated; and that a strict adherence to truth was one of the fundamental rules of the institution; so zealously, indeed, was this observed, and especially in their poetical characters, that even satire was prohibited, or accounted as one of the 'three necessary and reluctant duties.' And so paramount was their observance of truth, that '*Y Gwîr ynerb yn y Byd*,' or 'truth against the world,' was the invariable rule and motto of the institution. Next to this, we may mention the full and free investigation of all matters relating to knowledge and wisdom that fell beneath their inquiry. With reference to this, it was an unalterable maxim among the Bards, '*choeliaw dim a choeliaw pob peth*,' that is, to believe nothing that had not the support of reason and truth, and to believe every thing that had: and such a maxim was particularly conducive to the establishment of useful knowledge, on a firm and enduring basis.

The unreserved publicity of their actions was another principle particularly regarded by the Bards. Hence it became a rule to have their meetings or congresses always held in the open

\* This latter duty cannot imply the actual co-operation of the Bard in any expedient punishment, excepting only as an inciter to arms in a just and necessary cause. The Bard himself was always a man of peace, and was considered too poor and precious to be involved in bloodshed.

air, in a conspicuous situation, and while the sun was above the horizon, or, according to the Bardic maxim—'yn wyneb haul, a llygad goleuni,' 'in the sun's face, beneath the eye of light.' The place usually selected for this purpose was as central as possible; a circumstance to which Cæsar alludes in the following passage: 'At an appointed period in every year, they have a general meeting in the territory of Carnutes, which lies about the middle of Gaul, in a grove,\* consecrated for the occasion. To this place all persons resort who have any controversies to be determined, and where they submit to the judgment delivered by the Druids.'†

At these public *gorseddau*, or congresses, it was always necessary that the Bardic traditions should be recited; and as this custom is supposed to have been regularly continued until the extinction of Bardism, it accounts for the veneration with which the songs and aphorisms of the Bards have ever been esteemed in Wales. It also stamps on those productions a character for authenticity far superior to that of the majority of ancient compositions, and must have proved, without doubt, an infallible security against their falsifications, since they were invariably published, according to the emphatic Bardic maxim—

'In the sun's face, beneath the eye of light.'

Such were the most conspicuous ordinances of this very singular establishment. Originating in a period of the most remote antiquity, it was, notwithstanding, reared on a basis at once simple, sublime, and endurable. Its objects were of the purest and noblest description—the advancement, namely, of morality, peace, and universal good-will, and the celebration and reward of virtue and excellence; while, to achieve these important ends, the means employed were natural, just, and peculiarly efficacious. Hence it was that wisdom and sound knowledge were successfully cultivated by the Bards of Ancient Britain; and history, in a great measure, was secured from those abuses and corruptions which have, in the earlier career of other nations, perverted its objects, and rendered its utility extremely problematical.

But, after all, much care and caution are necessary in the examination of the tenets, if we may so express ourselves, of this ancient system; so as, on the one hand, to divest them of the mythological characteristics which have been ignorantly assigned to them by those who have endeavoured to clothe them with a fabulous investiture; and, on the other, to disentangle them from the metaphysical perplexities in which a few of their more zealous admirers have involved them. This done, we shall find that the system in itself was beautiful, and that, while it constituted a very conspicuous feature in the mechanism of the state, it had the most salutary and powerful influence over the morals of the people.

Having treated thus far of the general attributes and objects of Bardism, it only remains for us to give a brief view of its history and extinction.

Nennius, who wrote in the ninth century, and in the reign of Prince Mervyn, is the first of the British historians who mentions the Bards. He says, that Talhaian, Tatangun, Nuevin, Bluchbar, and Cian were renowned for their skill in poetry, and that Aneurim, Taliesin, and Llywarch Hên, or the Aged, flourished in the sixth century as professors of the same art. Of these three last the works are now extant; their chief characteristic being a diffuse record of the annals of the age. Taliesin, indeed, was not content merely with the relation or recording of historical events; he had studied with much assiduity the mystical love of the Druids, more especially the then very prevalent doctrine of Metempsychosis. Two or three of his poems are expressly devoted to this subject, and afford a very curious instance

\* There is some dispute among the learned as to the Latin word. Some say it is *lucus*, others *laco*. The Bardic traditions certainly make no allusion to groves.

† De Bello Gallico, lib. vi., c. 13.

of the effects of that wild notion upon a powerful and creative imagination. We must consider the productions of Taliesin, then, as a repository of some of the maxims of Druidism, as well as an impartial record of historical facts. His elegaic and lyrical poems abound in pathetic touches, as well as in passages of sublime fancy and elevated morality; and, with the conscious merit of a child of song, he designates himself at once a scholar and a poet, and even claims, as the privilege of his muse, the flowing speech of a prophet.

In the poems of Llywarch Hên, who was of princely lineage, and had himself borne sway in Cambray, the most ancient form of British metre is observable. This is the *Triban Milur*, or warrior's triplet, a combination, it should seem, of proverbial love and moral inculcation. The following may, perhaps, convey to the English reader some idea of the simplicity of these proverbial triplets:

On All-Saints' even—a season of pleasant pastime,  
The gale and the storm accompany each other.  
It is the part of falsehood to keep a secret.

The leaf that is scattered by the wind,  
Alas! how perishable it is!

Already is it old—this year was it born!

From the sixth to the tenth century, a long chasm occurs in the exertions of the Bards. The devastation and misery occasioned by a constant state of warfare with other nations, and the turbulent anarchy accruing from civil dissensions among the Welsh themselves, have prevented the preservation of any Bardic productions of note or interest; and it would appear that the confused state of the country had communicated an influence to this once revered and sacred institution; for, in the reign of Bleddyn ab Cynfyn, who was contemporary with William the Conqueror, certain laws were enacted for the purification and reform of the manners of the Bards. In a subsequent reign, also, that, namely, of Gruffydd ab Cynan, it was deemed requisite to add other laws more rigorous and effective than those established by Bleddyn; and from the purport of these we may form a very accurate estimation of the profligate and unruly habits of the Welsh minstrels. It was particularly enacted that neither the Bard nor the humble minstrel should lead the life of a vagabond; 'there were to be no make-bates,' says an old historian, 'no vagabonds, no ale-house-haunters, no drunkards, no brawlers, no whore-hunters, no thieves, nor companions of such.' They were also prohibited from entering any house, or making satirical songs on any person, without the licence and free-will of the parties concerned. A violation of these salutary restrictions subjected the offender to a rigorous and summary punishment; for, by a singular severity, every man was made an officer of justice, and became empowered, not only to arrest and punish at discretion, but to seize upon whatever property the offender had in his possession. This statute, the severity of which indicates, in some degree, its necessity, was frequently put in force by the reigning authority of the country, as appears by several commissions, directing the better regulation of the Order. Thus it would appear, that the sacred character of the Bardic office had become polluted by all the common vices of our nature; that a long and dark period of civil dissension had caused the degeneration of an institution, than which, at one time, nothing could be more beautiful, or more beneficial to the state. But this could not have been actually the case, at least, not to the full extent which these severe regulations would induce us to suppose. True it is, that there were much licentiousness of spirit, and much profligacy of manner, among the minstrels, but we question whether they extended to the Bards. It is not fair to condemn them, unreservedly, upon the presumptive evidence which the deficiency of any remaining works can afford. In those rude and boisterous times, and subjected as Wales was to the continual incursions of the

Saxons and Normans, many opportunities must have occurred for the total destruction of the Bardic productions; and we have the best possible reason to believe, that the higher order of Bards was still uncontaminated by the prevailing pestilence: for the high and favoured privileges bestowed upon them by preceding sovereigns, particularly by the great Howel Dda, or the Good, were still continued in unmodified extension. The *Bard Teuluwr*, or household Bard of the court, still held the eighth place in the Prince's court; he possessed his land free; the prince supplied him with a horse and a woollen robe, and the princes with linen. He sat next to the governor of the palace, at the great court-festivals, upon which occasions it was the duty of the said governor to deliver to him his harp. The Bard also received, at such festivals, the steward of the household's garment for his fee. The other perquisites and privileges to which the Bards were entitled, by virtue of their sacred calling, were extremely curious, as were the formal ceremonies which they observed in the execution of their duties. Thus, when a song was called for, the *Cadair-eardd*, or the Bard who possessed the badge of the chair, first sang a hymn in glory of God; then followed one in honour of his prince. Having accomplished these, all further exertion devolved upon the *Bardd Teuluwr*, or domestic Bard, whose duty it was to amuse the company with any subject of his own selection, and to sing to the princess in her own apartment at such times as he could be spared from more important duties.

He received from the prince's own hand an ivory chess-board,\* or a harp, and from the princess a ring of gold, and his abode was with that of the governor of the palace. The *merch-gwobr*, or marriage-fine of his daughter, was 120 pence, her nuptial presents were 30 shillings, and her portion 3*l.*; all of which were paid out of the royal treasury. In addition to these, the chief Bard was entitled to the *merch-gwobr* for the daughters of all the inferior members of the faculty within the district over which he presided.

The *Pencerdd*, or chief Bard, was not an officer of the court, although he occasionally sat in the tenth place. He had his land free, and took precedence of the court Bard, who only occupied the twelfth seat. His death was valued at 126 cows, and any injury done him at 6 cows, and 120 pence.\*

The regulations enforced by Gruffydd ab Cynan were followed by very beneficial results, for from this time many excellent Bards arose. The cultivation of poetry seems to have been very sedulously pursued, although, from the unsettled state of the country, the Bards partook more or less of a military character. Thus, Meilir, who was the Bard of Gruffydd ab Cynan, was a soldier and a statesman, and was sent by that prince to transact a negotiation in England. Gwalchmai, the son of Meilir, says, with much exultation, in one of his poems, that he had defended the marches of Wales against the English; and Cynddelw, the Great Bard, as he was styled, was a person eminent for his valour, and lived in the court of Madoc ab Maredydd, Prince of Powis.

\* That chess and backgammon were known to the ancient British, we have satisfactory proof: indeed, the name of the latter game is decidedly of British origin, from *bach-camun*, 'little battle.'

\* 'Leges Wallicæ,' 35, et seq.: In early times the sacred injunction 'whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,' was not at all regarded in Wales. In cases of murder, 'it was lawful,' says Sir John Wynne, 'for the offender's friends, whosoever they were, to bring 5*l.* for every man for a fine to the lord, and to acquit them, so it were not in cases of treason. A damnable custom, used in those days, in the lordship's marches, until the new ordinance of Wales, made in the 27th year of Henry VIII.' This 'damnable custom,' by the way, was not wholly unknown in England, and was very common on the Continent during the middle ages.



From the tenth to the latter end of the twelfth century, the continual attempts which were made by the English to cast Wales into subjection, prevented the Welsh Bards from formally exercising their functions. Those who, in times of peace and security, were the delighters and instructors of the people, now became assistants in one common cause, that, namely, of repelling the incursions of an ambitious and formidable enemy; and, as has already been mentioned, the sacred character and calling of the Bard were, of necessity, profaned by the bearing of arms, although the profanation was abundantly extenuated by the provocations which rendered it necessary. Still, however, the more private and domestic duties of the Bard were eagerly persisted in; he preserved the genealogies of his patron and chieftain, he recited his warlike efforts, celebrated his civil virtues, eulogized his magnanimity, his hospitality, his talents, and his personal accomplishments. He likewise performed the mournful office of composing an elegy on the death of the chieftain to whose establishment he appertained: this he sang to the surviving relations, in honour of the illustrious dead, reciting the noble families from which the departed chief had sprung, and the heroic exploits performed by himself or his ancestors. But the hallowed exaltation of the Bardic character had departed. Circumstances had occurred, in the omnipotent revolution of time, to produce a woful degeneration in the once favoured and sacred race, and all that remained were a few scattered instances of a noble and gifted spirit, but without any one relic of that national and reverential sacredness with which the Bard of old was so mystically imbued.

The conquest of Wales by the first Edward, gave an extinguishing blow to the feeble remains of Bardism: not, however, as is usually stated, and commonly believed, by absolutely exterminating the Bards, but by strictly forbidding them the exercise of their inclination and duties. The gloomy subjection into which the Welsh were cast by the prowess and policy of the English Justinian, was rendered doubly oppressive by this extension of the conqueror's power; and it was not till Owain Glyndwr arose to rescue his country from a yoke which had become intolerable, that the Bards once more resumed their functions, being induced to do so by the munificence of that hero, and by the transitory ray which had dawned upon freedom. But the failure of this last effort of expiring freedom precipitated the Welsh into a state of slavery the most deep and severe. The Bards were prohibited by law from holding any public assemblies, or from enjoying any of those privileges which formerly belonged to them. During this dark period, and during the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, the genius of poetry was nearly extinguished, or was only employed in soothing the misery of the times by gloomy and obscure predictions of more prosperous days.

But although the sparks of the ancient poetic fire were re-kindled into flame by the union of Wales with England, the spirit of the order of Bardism was irrevocably lost. It had disappeared with the freedom of the Welsh,—with that freedom which was their birth-right and their glory; for no sooner had they ceased to be of themselves a nation, than that sacred order was overthrown, discord usurped the place of national concord and unanimity, and therefore became subject to no power except that which was created by their own wild passions and inclinations. The influence of the Bard, once so powerful and effectual, was now of no avail, the demon of discord and turbulent anarchy was let loose upon the people, and, impatient of control, they lost all their ancient high-born magnanimity, and became a nation of rude and barbarous plunderers. Thus Bardism, properly so called and considered, gradually disappeared; and we have now no tangible traces of an order once so powerful and beneficial, except

the somewhat problematical, but stupendous altars, which are to be found scattered throughout Britain. These, if not actually constructed by the Bards, were doubtless erected by their predecessors, the Druids, and are to be considered as essentially connected with the early institution of Bardism.

#### THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT.

*The Children of Light, a Sermon, preached before the University of Cambridge, at St. Mary's Church, on Advent Sunday, 1828. By Julius Charles Hare, M.A., Fellow of Trinity College. Taylor. London, 1228.*

SINCE the Revolution of 1688, the Church of England has not produced a very great man. It has contained many good, many learned, many able men; it has been the best of the larger classes of English society; but that union of moral, intellectual, and active power, which constitutes a great man, has not appeared on the steps of its altars. True neither has it appeared in almost any other situation. We have had some lawyers, whose acuteness, in every possible particular case, has been the nearest conceivable approximation to systematic strength, to scientific principle. The deed has been accurately drawn and fairly copied, but still we want the hand and seal of greatness. In poetry, England has been favoured; in politics, we have had Burke, and perhaps one or two more; but the Church has produced no St. Augustine, no Luther, no Jeremy Taylor, not even a Bossuet. The Dissenters, indeed, have not been more fortunate. The spirit of Baxter has slept: the uncared-for coppice of Gerizim has not been more flourishing than the enclosed and tended plantations of Zion; and for this there are abundant reasons; but there are no very obvious ones for the absence of first-rate minds from the establishment. 'Tithes!' says one party; 'Pluralities!' exclaims another; 'Articles!' mutters a third; and a fourth would throw all the blame upon religion itself. But, by the leave of these gentlemen, tithes, pluralities, articles, and even Christianity, existed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The obstacles which did not prevent the appearance of Leighton, and Cudworth, and Henry More, cannot be the only impediments to the existence of such men now. Yet we have been accustomed to consider Mr. Milman a lesser star than Donne or Herbert, and Dr. Blomfield not so predominant a mind as Hooker.

We cannot solve the difficulty. Perhaps, since the days when the Church was in danger, it has become too subservient an instrument of the State. It may have sacrificed its independence to secure its existence, and lost, like the slave, one-half its worth. And herein there seems to be the difference, which the problem requires, between its former and its present condition. For it was once among the main causes, as well as the most powerful champions, of a mighty quarrel, instead of enjoying a secure, and comparatively unimportant, post, behind the shield of the Constitution. It fought in the front of the battle, instead of being left to take care of the baggage. Now it claims no separate and powerful character; and, from the wretched fear that its sides might be galled by the people, is content to lacquey the heels of the Government. But, whatever be the reason, the fact appears certain, that we have now scarce more than a flat desert, in exchange for a temple, the like of which never was seen on earth.

The sermon before us is the most hopeful omen we have discovered of better things to come. We should have been glad to see a strong man arise, and show, by argument, that Christianity is not a system of blindness and darkness; or we should have hailed, with our most earnest thanks, the poet of religion, who, by his own exceeding light, was able to produce in us the consciousness of that light which is in human nature and in the Gospel. But this little book gives us a specimen of a union of all the faculties in the service of religion, which needs only be more extensively applied, to create works worthy of the best age of

the Church of England. Christianity is here looked at neither as a matter of shadowy formalism, nor of merely terrible and iron reality. Nor does Mr. Hare appear to think that he degrades it by offering in its honour precious and beautiful gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, and all the richest produce of the human mind. These, we know, it will be said by many persons, are the customary phrases with regard to every one who makes religion a mere prop for his own reputation, and yields up the divine and exclusive character of Christianity to the usurpations of intellect, learning, and fancy. But, unfortunately for the admirers of conscientious ignorance and halloved dullness, the most sectarian pulpit in the land never resounded with a discourse more entirely and devoutly Christian than that before us, one in which the value of the Advent of Christ is represented to be more certain and immense. And, at the same time, this discourse inculcates what never was taught from any sectarian pulpit, a love for man, and reverence for human nature, the best evidences and only ground-work of an earnest faith in God.

The views of christianity which this sermon discloses are remarkable, not indeed for embodying our religion in any very peculiar system, but for the earnest and delightful christianity of feeling in which they must have originated. There is abundant power of thought, but accompanied by a child-like simplicity and kindliness; and which is, above all, extraordinary in our day, clothed in a style of such fresh, various, and imaginative beauty, as we can scarcely find equalled since the sermons of the 17th century—a strong man with the gentleness of an infant, and the garment of a prince. The opening exposition of the evils of our tendency to believe that we have undergone a sudden and complete renovation of character, and so to break off all the connection between the present and the past of our minds, is, perhaps, of more immediate interest than any other part of the work. The subsequent contrast between christianity and paganism is very admirable, though not pretending to be complete. And the whole concluding portion is of a serene and fanciful beauty, which would delight Sir Thomas Browne, and would not be disowned by Jeremy Taylor.

The following extracts will convey but an imperfect notion of this valuable discourse:

'You have often been admonished to examine the Mosaic law, for the types of Christ contained in it; you have often been exhorted to study the history of the Jews, for the matters typical of Christ contained in it; let me exhort you to search also for similar types in another book, a book penned by the same hand which guided the inspired penmen of the Bible, the book of God's creation. So will you learn to look at Nature as you ought to look, to discern something more than the ever-changing colours and ever-waving folds of her garments, to catch sight of those capital features in which her spirit is most visibly expressed, nay, to pierce through her body to her soul, or rather to behold the workings of her soul in all the movements of her body: so will you learn to discover something more than the mere properties of space and time, lines and numbers, in her laws; so will you learn to pour life into the dry bones of your natural philosophy. Holding converse with nature to the godly is holding converse with God: it is to them as another and a prior Bible; which, when man's secondary writing has once been rubbed off from it, and when the original characters are brought out and deciphered and rightly interpreted, as with the help of the other they may be, preaches the same doctrine, reveals the same secrets, declares the glory of God, and sheweth his handiwork. By such a course of study alone shall we be enabled to dive, at least some way, into the ineffable meaning of that mysterious declaration when, on the eve of the heavenly sabbath, God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good; or to comprehend

\* We trust we need not now explain to the readers of 'The Athenæum,' that, in our belief, there are sectarians in the Church Establishment as well as out of it; wherever, in short, men make their own vanity, and passions, and feebleness, the standard by which to measure the nature of God.